OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE

English Language.

In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

——— *Minus ſunt ferendi, qui grammaticam Artem, ut tenuem ac jejunam, cavillantur; quæ niſi Oratori futuro Fundamenta fideliter jecerit, quicquid ſuperſtruxeris, corruet.*

QUINCT. L. i.

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OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

SIR,

OUR preſent Manner of Spelling in general ſeems to merit the Name of *Orthography*, and to deſerve to be aſcertained; but there are ſome Words, which may admit of Alteration.

The great Improvement of our Language, during the laſt Century, appears to have been chiefly effected *by carefully avoiding a Redundance either of Vowels or Conſonants* ——

And *by ſpelling many Words, derived from the two dead Languages, with a Conformity to their* Latin *or* Greek *Originals.*

In the firſt Editions of the *Engliſh* Bibles, and other Writings of near the ſame Date, we find *Mee*, *Toppe*, *Tinne*, *Sonne*, *Ramme*, *Warriour*, *Souldier*, *Woordes*, *Compagnie*, *Awanſwere*, *Tourn*, *Kindneſſe*, *Hedde*, &c.

But in later Editions of the ſame Books, we read *Me*, *Top*, *Tin*, *Son*, *Ram*, *Warrior*, *Soldier*, *Words*, *Company*, *Anſwer*, *Turn*, *Kindneſs*, *Head*, &c.

Thus, by a proper Mixture of Vowels and Conſonants, the Reformers of our Language have preſerved a Medium between Roughneſs and Effeminacy.

This Rule ſeems to have been already applied to all thoſe Words, which neceſſarily required the Application of it; at leaſt no Word now occurs to me, which I would venture to alter, merely on Account of Redundance, either in Vowels or Conſonants.

Change in Language is of itſelf an Evil, and ought not to be attempted, but for great Advantage; and therefore, though I think the Words *Sovereign*, *Foreign*, &c. might better be ſpelt without a *g*; and that the Words *Genuine*, *Sanguine*, *Libertine*, &c. might better be ſpelt without an *e* at the End; yet, as the Advantage of this Change would be but ſmall, we ought perhaps to decline the Innovation.

The ſecond Rule, which relates to derived Words, hath been inforced by the Improvers of our Language in the following Inſtances.

Inſtead

Inſtead of *Aulters*, *Alleadgeyng*, *Characſtar*, *Conſter*, *Colleadge*, *Authour*, *Geneology*, *Patriarke*, *Sprete*, *Solempne*, *Superiour*, *Mediatour*, *Supream*, *Extream*, *Compleat*, *Tenour*, *Sympoſiarke*, *Anotomy*, *Vertue*, *Aboundant*, &c. we now read, *Altars*, from *Altaria*; *Alleging*, from *Allego*; *Character*, from χαρακτηρ; *Conſtrue*, from *Conſtruere*; *College*, from *Collegium*; *Author*, from *Author*; *Genealogy*, from γενεαλογια; *Patriarch*, from πατριαρχης; *Spirit*, from *Spitus*; *Solemn*, from *Solennis*; *Superior*, from *Superior*; *Mediator*, from *Mediator*; *Supreme*, from *Supremus*; *Extreme*, from *Extremus*; *Complete*, from *Completus*; *Tenor*, from *Tenor*; *Sympoſiarch*, from συμποσιαρχης; *Anatomy*, from ανατομια; *Virtue*, from *Virtus*; *Abundant*, from *Abundans*, &c.

This Rule might ſtill be extended, with great Advantage to the *Engliſh* Tongue; for by ſpelling many Words, with a ſtricter Conformity to their *Latin* or *Greek* Originals, our own Language would be more ſtudied in foreign Countries, and better eſtabliſhed in our own: It would be more ſtudied in foreign Countries, becauſe it would become eaſier to learned Foreigners, who would then be able, at firſt Sight, to know the certain Ideas affixed to many of our Words; and it would alſo be better eſtabliſhed in our own Country, becauſe no Man, who pretends to be a Scholar, would ever preſume hereafter to deviate from this Mode of Spelling, leſt he ſhould be deemed ignorant of the dead Languages.

But

But I would not be underſtood to attempt any violent and unnatural Alterations, in Compliance with a favorite Syſtem. I would not be thought willing to change *Church* into *Kurch*; *Charm* into *Carm*; *Purſe* into *Burſe*; *Earth* into *Erth*; *Emperor* into *Imperor*; *Leſs* into *Laſs*; *Upper* into *Huper*; *Giant* into *Gigant*; *Envy* into *Invy*; *Syringe* into *Suringe*; or *Syſtem* into *Suſtem*, &c.

Becauſe *Church* is evidently derived from Κυριακη; *Charm* from *Carmen*; *Purſe* from Βυρσα; *Earth* from Ερα; *Emperor* from *Imperator*; *Leſs* from Ελασσων; *Upper* from Υπερ; *Giant* from *Gigans*; *Envy* from *Invidia*; *Syringe* from Συριγξ; *Syſtem* from Συστημα, &c.

But I would be underſtood to adviſe thoſe Alterations only, which might be eaſily made, and would improve our Language without diſtorting it.

The Word *Ancient* is now generally ſpelt *antient*, with a *t* inſtead of a *c*; that the Derivation of it from *Antiquus* may be more evident; might we not therefore analogically write *ſpatious*, rather than *ſpacious*; *gratious* than *gracious*; *vitious* than *vicious*; *pretious* than *precious*, &c? in Conformity to their *Latin* Originals, *ſpatioſus*, *gratioſus*, *vitioſus*, *pretioſus*.

By a tacit but univerſal Agreement, we write *indicted*, not *undicted*, from *indictus*; *inſane*, not *unſane*, from *inſanus*; *innate*, not *unnate*, from *innatus*; *indifferent*, not *undifferent*, from *indifferens*;

ferens; *impoſſible*, not *unpoſſible*, from *impoſſibilis*.

Might we not therefore by Analogy, and without any violent Change of Language, always write *incertain*, *(incertus)* for *uncertain*; *inconſiderate (inconſideratus)* for *unconſiderate*; *inſtable (inſtabilis)* for *unſtable*; *ingrateful (ingratus)* for *ungrateful*; *injuſt (injuſtus)* for *unjuſt*; *inauſpicious (inauſpicatus)* for *unauſpicious*; *incapable (incapax)* for *uncapable*, &c.?

We always write *infixed*, not *enfixed*, from *infigo*; *injury*, not *enjury*, from *injuria*; *indulge*, not *endulge*, from *indulgeo*.

Might we not therefore, by a Parity of Reaſoning, write *inquire* for *enquire*, from *inquiro*; *interpret* for *enterpret*, from *interpretor*; *inſue* for *enſue*, from *inſequor*, &c.?

And it would undoubtedly ſoften and meliorate our Language, if we uſed the Syllable *in* inſtead of *en* in ſpelling many even of thoſe Words, which can not be derived from the *Latin*, if they will eaſily admit the Change: Thus *encourage* might be wrote *incourage*; *encounter incounter*; *endeavour indeavor*; *employ imploy*; *enſnare inſnare*, &c.

We already write *inflame*, not *inflaim*, from *inflammo*; *defame*, not *defaim*, from *defamo*, &c.

Would it not therefore be right to alter the Words *proclaim*, *proclaiming*, from *proclamo*, into *proclame*, *proclameing*; *explain*, *explaining*, from *explano*, into *explane*, *explaneing*, &c.? And this Alteration is the more neceſſary, becauſe we already adhere

adhere cloſely to the *Latin* in ſpelling the Subſtantives derived from theſe very Verbs; for we write *Proclamation*, not *Proclaimation*; *Explanation*, not *Explaination*, &c. Should you here aſk me, how I would ſpell *obtain*, *retain*, &c. which are as manifeſtly derived from *obtineo*, *retineo*, &c. as *exclaim* from *exclamo*, *&c.*

The Anſwer to this is obvious, from what I have already ſaid, *that Amendment is only indeavoured, where it can eaſily be made:* to write *obtine*, *retine*, &c. would be ſuch a Diſtortion, of which no Precedent could be ſhewed; and the preſent Manner of Spelling ſufficiently declares the Original of the Words in Queſtion.

The Words *proceed*, *proceeding*, from *procedo*; *exceed*, *exceeding*, from *excedo*, &c. might be wrote, *procede*, *procedeing*, *excede*, *excedeing*, &c. in Conformity to the Verbs, from which they are derived.

We are, I think, unanimous in writing *expedient* from *expediens*; *obedient* from *obediens*; *conſtituent* from *conſtituens*, &c.

And would it not be beneficial to our Language, if analogouſly we wrote *aſſiſtent* for *aſſiſtant*; *deſcendent* for *deſcendant*; *attendent* for *attendant*; *reſpondent* for *reſpondant*; *dependent* for *dependant*, &c.

In Conformity to their *Latin* Originals, *aſſiſtens*, *deſcendens*, *attendens*, *reſpondens*, *dependens*, &c.

Alſo

Alſo the Subſtantives derived from theſe Participles would eaſily admit the ſame Change——— it would be proper to write *Aſſiſtence* inſtead of *Aſſiſtance*, *Attendence* inſtead of *Attendance*, *Dependence* inſtead of *Dependance*, &c.

The Words *Offence*, *Suſpence*, *Defence*, &c. might be more accurately wrote *Suſpenſe*, *Offenſe*, *Defenſe*, ; in Similitude of their *Latin* Originals *Suſpenſio*, *Offenſio*, *Defenſio*, &c. and the Word *Licenſe* ſhould be ſpelt *Licence*, becauſe derived from *Licencia*.

The Words *Honour*, *Splendour*, *Candour*, *Favour*, *Labour*, &c. might be wrote in Conformity to the *Latin*, *Honor*, *Splendor*, *Candor*, *Favor*, *Labor*, &c. *Publick* might be wrote *Public* without a *k* from *Publicus*.

The following are ſome of thoſe Words which might receive a ſmall Alteration in Spelling for the ſake of Diſtinction: *Exil* might be wrote to denote a baniſhed Man; *Exile* might ſolely convey the Idea of Baniſhment; *Waiſt* might denote the Part of the Body ſo called; and this manner of Spelling would ſufficiently diſtinguiſh it from *Waſte*. *Haſt*, when it is a Subſtantive, ſhould be wrote *Haſte*, to diſtinguiſh it from the Verb: *Born*, when it comes from the Verb *bear*, ſhould be wrote *borne* — and the Words *breath*, *mouth*, *ſheath*, *bath*, when they are Verbs, ſhould be wrote, as they are pronounced, *breathe*, *mouthe*, *ſheathe*, *bathe*, &c. to diſtinguiſh them from the Subſtantives.

Notwithſtanding all our Indeavors many Words muſt ſtill remane unalterable; and, tho' they differ neither in Spelling nor Pronunciation, will yet ſtand for different Ideas, and frequently for different Parts of Speech. Nor is this a Defect peculiar to our own Tongue, the * two dead Languages, which

* Inſtances of *Greek* and *Latin* Words, which, altho' they conſiſt of the ſame Letters and have the ſame Pronunciation, are yet of different Parts of Speech, of different Conjugations, or of different Declenſions, and always bear different Meanings.

Ναὸς, gen. from ναυς a Ship.
Ναὸς, a Temple.
κῆρ, for κεαρ, the Heart.
κὴρ, Fate.
ἤ, it may be.
ἦ, he ſaid.
ἧ, he ſent.
ᾗ, to whom.
Ζᾶ, from Ζαω, I live.
Ζᾶ, from Ζεω, I ferment.
Πλέω, I ſail.
Πλέω, for Πλεονα, more.
ὄα, a Tree.
ὄα, a Sheep's Skin.
ἴον, from εἰμι, I went.
ἴον, from ιος, alone.
ἰοῦ, from ιος, a Dart.
ἰοῦ, an Exclamation, &c. &c.

Regis, Verb.
Regis, Subſt.
Libras, Verb.
Libras, Subſt.
Nidificas, Verb.
Nidificas, Adject.
Nexus, Subſt.
Nexus, Part.
Manes, Subſt.
Manes, Verb.
Nexas, Verb.
Nexas, Part.
Nexa, Verb.
Nexa, Part.
Nexa, Subſt. from Nexum.
Motus, Part.
Motus, Subſt.
Nota, Verb.
Nota, Part.
Pugnis, from Pugnus.
Pugnis, from Pugna.
Pugna, Verb.
Pugna, Subſt.
Pugnas, Verb.
Pugnas, Subſt.
Pugno, Verb.
Pugno, Subſt.
Malo, Verb.
Malo, Subſt.
Malus, Subſt. an Apple Tree.
Malus, Adject.
Malum, Subſt. an Apple.
Malum, Adject, &c. &c.

The Number of theſe Inſtances might be greatly increaſed, but as it is my Intention to give Hints only, I ſhall leave this Taſk to the Exerciſe of your own Memory, which will eaſily ſupply you with additional Examples. And here I can not but take occaſion to

which we juſtly admire, are by no means exempt from it. But ſhould we be hindered by this Conſideration from attempting an Improvement in our own Language, we might be diſcouraged by a Parity of Reaſoning from indeavoring to make our-

to commend our own Language: for altho' the ſame Word is often found to ſtand for either a Verb or a Subſtantive, yet the Reader can ſeldom have the leaſt doubt in which Capacity it is to be uſed: the Article generally declares the Subſtantive; and the Perſon, or the auxiliary Verb, makes manifeſt *the Verb.*

Our Subſtantives never vary their Termination, *and it is a noble Advantage, that we have no Diſtinction of Genders, but only where there is a real Diſtinction of Sex; we turn over no Dictionary to know whether a* Foot-path *is maſculine or fœminine; the neuter* it *ſaves the Learner all that Trouble, which he muſt have in the* Greek *or* Latin, *and which makes the* French *Language very difficult.*

Our Adjectives and Participles are all undeclined, and yet our Language is ſufficiently full and clear.

The expreſſing all the States and Circumſtances of Nouns in both Numbers by Signs or Particles, which belong to all Nouns equally, is a very great Excellence above the Greek *and* Latin, *which ring the Changes of five or ſix Caſes thro' as many different Declenſions.*

The Conjugation of our regular Verbs is extremely eaſy, and almoſt all Grammars leave out the Formation of the Paſſive Voice as unneceſſary: and the irregular and defective Verbs are ſo few, that a ſhort Table lays all or moſt of them in view.

See a Pamphlet intituled — *The many Advantages of a good Language, &c.* publiſhed in 1724.

This juſt Encomium upon the *Engliſh* Language makes me bewail, that we neglect the Grammatical Part of it, which renders it as yet abſolutely neceſſary, that we ſhould learn *Latin* in order to learn *Engliſh:* whereas if Children were at firſt taught the Rules of Grammar in *Engliſh*, and inſtructed how to apply them to their own Language, they would not only write *Engliſh* correctly, but would afterwards be able [inaſmuch as the general Rules of Grammar are the ſame in all Languages] in one Year to learn as much *Latin* and *Greek* as they now learn in ſeven: and two Months would be Time long enough to learn any modern Language.

But under the Idea of an *Engliſh* Grammar I comprehend neither Rules for joining of Syllables nor Rules for Pronunciation; the one can be uſeful only to mere Infants, the other to Foreigners—— The neceſſary Grammar ſhould contain only the Flexions of

ourſelves honeſt Men, ſince it is evident, that we can never become quite perfect.

If we could attain to a Propriety in Spelling, our next Care muſt be to preſerve it: and for this Purpoſe we ought to make it an invariable Rule, *never to abbreviate any Word in our proſe Writings by the Omiſſion even of a ſingle Letter, altho the Place of it is ſupplied by an Apoſtrophe.* Abbreviations are deſtructive of Language; and the Uſe of them, altho' allowed in Poetry, is inexcuſable in Proſe, becauſe always unneceſſary: and even our Poets might add much Harmony to their Numbers by uſing their abbreviating Licence leſs frequently.

In the Works of our moſt approved Proſe Writers we too often find *lov'd* for *loved*, *fill'd* for *filled*, *grudg'd* for *grudged*, *whilſt* for *whileſt*, *judgment* for *judgement*, *acknowledgment* for *acknowlegement*, *wandring* for *wandering*, *remembring* for *remembering*, *ſhortning* for *ſhortening*, *heard* for *hearcd*, *oft* for *often*, *coud* for *could*, &c.

Sometimes even two Words are unnaturally abbreviated into one — *tis* and *it's* are uſed for *it is*, *there's* for *there is*, *ſhant* for *ſhall not*, *wont* for *will*

Nouns and Verbs, and the Rules of Syntax; which might be taught ſo eaſily and in ſo ſhort a Time, that even young Ladies may learn it, as they antiently did, from the ſame Maſter who inſtructs them in Muſic. *Muſice et Grammatice quondam junctæ fuerunt*; ARCHITAS *atque* ARISTOXENUS *etiam ſubjectam Grammaticen Muſicæ putaverunt*; *et eoſdem utriuſque rei Præceptores fuiſſe, tum* SOPHRON *oſtendit Mimorum Scriptor, cum* EUPOLIS *apud quem* PRODAMUS *et Muſicen et Literas docet.*

Quinct. C. x. L. i.

will not, *dont* for *do not*, *cant* for *can not*, *hant* for *have not*, *maynt* for *may not*, &c.

And the greateſt Part of theſe ſtrange Words are now ſo familiarized, that the *Apoſtrophe*, which is a Kind of Apology for Omiſſion, is already diſcarded, as unneceſſary; and I ſhall not be ſurprized at ſeeing in a ſhort Time ſuch mutilated Words as *genral* for *general*, *natral* for *natural*, *lengthning* for *lengthening*, *ſolly* for *ſolely*, &c. with many other Monſtroſities of the like Stamp: and I may venture to foretell, that the preſent Variety of Spelling, of which almoſt every late Author has given us a new Specimen, will, within a Century, work an intire Change, or rather Confuſion in our Language, unleſs ſome Care is taken to prevent this growing Barbariſm.

Some certain Mode of Spelling ought to be fixed upon, and that ſpeedily. Sometimes I imagine that a Grammar and Dictionary, publiſhed under the Inſpection of an Academy, would not ſufficiently aſcertain our Language without the Aſſiſtence of the Legiſlature: but leſt you ſhould think that I would indeavor to force Men by Law to write with Propriety and Correctneſs of Style, I muſt declare, that I mean only to force them to ſpell with Uniformity according to certain given Patterns, and without Eliſions: and I am not only confident, that ſuch an Uniformity in Spelling might eaſily be effected, but that it would alone be ſufficient to preſerve our Language intire to the moſt diſtant Times; and I can not but eſteem the *Engliſh* Language to be of ſuch Con-

Conſequence to *Engliſhmen* in general, that a proper Act, for the Improvement and Preſervation of it, would do Honor to an *Engliſh* Parliament.

You may probably now aſk, by what Means an Act of Parliament could poſſibly be ſerviceable in this Caſe? To this I anſwer; that when ſome ſelect Perſons, call them a *Committée*, an *Academy*, or what elſe you pleaſe, have once, by order of our Senate, fixed among themſelves any certain Manner of Spelling, and made it known by the Publication of a † ſhort *Engliſh* Dictionary, that then

† It is the Fault of moſt Dictionaries to be full of Tautology, and to explane too much; if they were abridged they would become more uſeful, by being leſs perplexing. It muſt be acknowleged, that it is one of the Impefections of all Languages to have ſome Words, which will bear two, three, or more quite different Senſes; and that that Language, which has the feweſt of theſe ambiguous Terms, is the moſt perfect.

When ſuch Words occur it is abſolutely neceſſary, that their different and contradictory Meanings ſhould be taken Notice of by the Lexicographer—The Learner muſt be told that *deprecor* ſignifies *I pray for*, and *I pray againſt*—that *Hoſpes* denotes a *Gueſt*, *the Receiver of a Gueſt*, or *a Stranger*, *&c.* and Examples ſhould be given from approved Authors: but how intolerable muſt it appear to every Man of Senſe, to find frequently 6, 8, 10, or 20 ſuppoſed different Meanings added to a ſingle Word, when in Reality it has but one *leading* Senſe, which, once given, would inable a Learner to conſtrue that Word in every Example produced.

Fugio, ſays Mr. *Ainſworth*, has ſix different Meanings. 1ſt, It ſignifies *to fly*, *eſcape* or *run away*. Example, *Nam cum illi pugnabant maximè, ego tum fugiebam maximè.* 2. To *eſchew*, *ſhun* or *avoid*, *to be ſhy of*. Ex. *Si curam fugimus, Virtus fugienda eſt.* — *Hoc facito, hoc fugito.* 3. *To eſcape one's Knowlege*, *to be ignorant of*. Ex. *Illud, quam ſit difficile non te fugit.* 4. *To ſail away*. Ex. *Fugimus ſpumantibus undis.* 5. *Not to admit of*. Ex. *Fictitiæ Gemmæ Scarificationes candicantium fugiunt.* 6. *To forbear*. Ex. *Quid ſit futurum cras fuge quærere.*

Moveo has twenty-two different Senſes. 1ſt, It ſignifies *to move*, *ſtir*, *ſhake* or *wag*. Ex. *Move ocius te* — *Linguam movere* — *Caput*

then it ſhould be inacted by the Authority of Parliament, that the new Regulations in Spelling ſhould from thenceforth be ſtrictly adhered to in printing all *Engliſh* Bibles, Common Prayer Books, Books, Pamphlets, News Papers, *&c.* under a moſt ſevere Penalty to be levied upon every Printer and Publiſher, who ſhall purpoſely offend.

PRONUNCIATION lays ſome Clame to Conſideration, but is of far leſs Conſequence, than it is generally thought to be, becauſe the Variations, to

put movere. 2. To ſtir the Earth, to dig or plough. Ex. *Primus per Artem movit Agros.* 3. To move or ſtrike a muſical Inſtrument. Ex. *Citharam movere.* 4. To brandiſh or toſs. Ex. *Saxum immane movens.* 5. To wave in ſacrificing. Ex. *Fertum Jovi moveto.* 6. *To be* ſhaken. Ex. *Terram moviſſe nunciari ſolet.* 7. To affect, to influence. Ex. *Quam non Forma movere poteſt? certe mea Pectora movit.* 8. To ſtir up, to provoke. Ex. *Movere Tuſſim, Urinam, ſudorem, &c.* 9. To cauſe or effect. Ex. *Admirationes, Clamores, Plauſus, non Approbationes ſolum, movere debet Orator.* 10. To inrage, to incenſe. Ex. *Movere Catulos Leænæ.* 11. To raiſe Arms or War. Ex. *Movere Bellum.* 12. To make a ſtir in, or to make ado about. Ex. *Omnes Terras, omnia Maria movere.* 13. To rouſe, to riſe in Arms. Ex. *Opto ne ſe illa Gens moveat.* 14. To depart from, to leave a Place. Ex. *Ut te moveas tam infirma Valetudine.* 15. To take away, to remove. Ex. *Si ullam Literam moveris.* 16. To reſcind, alter, or make void. Ex. *Ea non muto, non moveo —— Quinquaginta Annorum Poſſeſſiones movere.* 17. To turn out, to caſt out, to deject, to degrade. Ex. *Nonnullos ſigniferos Loco movit ——Primo impetu movere Loco Hoſtium Aciem——Tribu eum movet.* 18. To put into any Concern by Fear, Love, Anger, *&c.* Ex. *Quem non ulla injecta movebant Tela, nunc omnes terrent auræ.* 19. To imploy, exerciſe, or engage. Ex. *Ingenium movit ſola Corinna meum.* 20. To attempt, to plot or contrive. Ex. *Majus opus moveo —— Movere ac moliri aliquid.* 21. To begin. Ex. *Ab Jove, Muſa Parens, carmina noſtra move.* 22. To ſay or ſing a Thing in a ſolemn Manner. Ex. *Solenni ſatis eſt voce movere Preces. ——Fatorum Arcana movebo.*

To add all the Inſtances that might

to which it muſt continually be liable, can never affect any Language, the Orthography of which is founded upon Etymology, and aſcertained by general Conſent.

I ſhall nevertheleſs ſet down ſome of the Inconſiſtencies in our Pronunciation and Accent; Part of which might be avoided by attending to Etymology, and Part by regarding the Rules of the Antients; but I muſt fairly confeſs that many of them appear abſolutely incurable.

The Letters *a* and *e* ſeem to have no fixed or determinate Sound, but vary their Powers in different Words and in different Poſitions. *A* is ſometimes pronounced *au*, as in *call*, *all*, *tall*, *ball*, *ſmall*, *pall*, *talk*, *walk*, *&c.* and *e* has frequently little or no Power, ſerving only to lengthen a Syllable, as in *made*, *cloſe*, *check-mate*, *teneable*; *&c.*

The

might be fairly given would be to tranſcribe more than half the Dictionary.

It would be hard to ſay, whether theſe Multiplications take their Riſe from Deſign or bad Judgement: but certain it is that Tautology is common to Dictionaries; many Words increaſe the Bulk of a Book, and the Bulk of it increaſes the Price. The Compilers of Dictionaries have indeed generally approved themſelves to be learned Men, as far as Skill in Languages would intitule them to that Appellation; but this Kind of Learning and common Senſe are ſo far from being inſeparable, that they are ſeldom found united in one Perſon. I will therefore rather imagine, that theſe Indeavors to multiply the Imperfections of Language muſt have aroſe from the Want of Judgement than the Want of Honeſty.

Since I have mentioned the Name of Mr. *Ainſworth*, and freely cenſured what I take to be a Fault in his Performance, I muſt in Juſtice add, that, notwithſtanding what I have ſaid, I eſteem his Dictionary, for many Reaſons, to be the moſt perfect Book of the Kind extant.

The Syllables *gre*, and *tre*, when final, are always pronounced *ger*, and *ter*, as in *maugre*, *Sceptre*, *Theatre*, *&c.* but this Irregularity might be eaſily corrected by introducing the old Spelling *Scepter*, *Theater*, *mauger*, *&c.*

Many Words are ſpelt differently, but pronounced without the leaſt Variation; thus *rough* is not diſtinguiſhed in Pronunciation from *ruff* — *blue* from *blew* — *one* from *won* — *read*, the Perfect of the Verb *read*, from *red* the Name of a Color.

On the contrary, ſome Words are wrote exactly alike, but pronounced differently; thus *Lives* the Subſtantive and *lives* the Verb — *Riſe* the Subſtantive and *riſe* the Verb — alſo *read* in the preſent Tenſe and *read* in the perfect are diſtinguiſhed from each other in Pronunciation only.

Theſe are great Defects, and I fear incorrigeable; but as they are rather the Defects of Language in general, than of our own Tongue in particular, we have no Reaſon to complain: and for Proof of this I ſhall refer you to your own Recollection; for tho I am certain you have not Vanity enough to preſume to underſtand any Language ſo well as your own, yet I am as certain, that a very little Recollection will inable you to find more Irregularities of the Kind we are now ſpeaking, even in either of the dead Languages, than with the utmoſt Pains you can find in our own.*

The *Engliſh* Language abounds in Irregularities in Relation to the Streſs and Accent laid upon Syllables.

* See the Note in Page 10.

Sometimes we appear to be guided by the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and, at other Times, to pay no Regard to them. We rightly make two Syllables of *Strophe*, *Thule*, *Cebes*, *&c.* becauſe they are derived from *Greek* Words of two Syllables. But ſhould any Man, for the ſame Reaſon, make two Syllables of the Word *Ode* [ωδη] or *Thebes* [θηβη] he would become the Subject of Mirth and Deriſion.

It would be offenſive to Critics to ſay *Sonŏrous*, or *Darĭus*; becauſe *no* in *Sonōrus* is long in *Latin*, and *ri* in *Darīus* is ſpelt in *Greek* with a Dipthong: and yet it would be criminal to perſue this Reaſoning, and to ſay *extrīcate*, and not *extrĭcate*, from *extrīco*; *Prosōdy*, and not *Prosŏdy*, from Προσῳδια; *blaſphēmous*, and not *blaſphĕmous*, from Βλασφημειν; *infāmous*, and not *infămous*, from *infāmis*; *contrāry*, and not *contrăry*, from *contrārius*; *inveſtīgate*, and not *inveſtĭgate*, from *inveſtīgo*, *&c.*

Some few Words have of late been pronounced in a Manner, which I believe is wholly unknown in any other Language, and ſeems calculated only for Stuttering and Confuſion. This Manner of pronouncing is ingeniouſly contrived by flinging the Accent back as far as the fourth Syllable; ſo that inſtead of *refrāctory* it is the Faſhion to ſay *rēfractory*, and inſtead of *Acādemy*, *Ācademy*, *&c.*

We have Demonſtration that the *Greeks* never placed the Accent beyond the third Syllable; and it is not to be preſumed, that any other People, except

except the *Engliſh*, were ever guilty of ſo great an Abſurdity.

We have hitherto ſpoke of Spelling and Pronunciation; the next Thing to be conſidered is Expreſſion; but, when I mention Expreſſion, I do not mean the Art of Oratory. A Treatiſe upon this Subject is as far from my Intention, as it is above my Abilities.

All I mean is to mark ſome few Words and Phraſes in the *Engliſh* Language which, I think ought to be avoided by every correct Writer —— and in doing this I ſhall rely upon the *Latin* as my chief, and ſureſt Director.*

The Word THAT ought never to be uſed as an Article relative; it would therefore be improper to ſay, *I know the Man*, that *preached Yeſterday*— The proper Expreſſion would be — *I know the Man*, WHO *preached Yeſterday.*

* Mr. *Dryden* ſeems to be intirely of the ſame Opinion, in his Dedication of *Troilus* and *Creſſida* to the Earl of *Sunderland.*

How barbarouſly we yet write and ſpeak your Lordſhip knows, and I am ſufficiently ſenſible in my own Engliſh; *for I am often put to a Stand in conſidering whether what I write is the Idiom of the Tongue, or falſe Grammar and Nenſenſe couched under the ſpecious Name of* Angliciſm; *and I have no other Way to clear my Doubts but by* TRANSLATING MY ENGLISH INTO LATIN, *and thereby trying what Senſe the Word will bear in a more ſtaple Language. I am deſirous, if poſſible, that we might all write with the ſame Certainty of Words and Purity of Phraſe, to which the* ITALIANS *firſt arrived and then the* FRENCH. *It ſhould mortify an* Engliſhman *to conſider, that from the Time of* BOCCACE *and* PETRARCH *the* ITALIAN *hath varied very little, and that the* Engliſh *of* Chaucer *their Cotemporary is not to be underſtood without the Help of a Dictionary: but their* Goth *and* Vandal *had the Advantage to be grafted on a* Roman *Stock.*

WHO is the only proper Word to be uſed in Relation to Perſons and Animals: WHICH, in Relation to Things: for it would be to the full as ungrammatical to ſay *Our Country*, WHO *ſuffered by the War* — as — *Our Father*, WHICH *art in Heaven.*

It would, for the ſame Reaſon, be improper to ſay — *This is a Teleſcope*, WHOSE *Goodneſs I know*: — for WHOSE is the Genitive of WHO, and ought not to be applied to Inanimates. The proper Expreſſion would be, *This is a Teleſcope, of* WHICH *I know the Goodneſs.*

The Word ONE ought ſeldom to be uſed but when it anſwers to the Uſe of the *Latin* Word *Unus.* How ſtrangely does it ſound to ſay, ONE *told me ſo* — and how extremely offenſive to a nice Ear are the following Expreſſions — *Virtue is* ONE's *great Concern* — *Theſe Books are excellent* ONES, *&c. &c.*

I have now neither Time nor Patience to ſet down all the Reaſons why every Word and Expreſſion in the following Pages are mean or incorrect: the bare Reading of ſome will inſtantly ſupply you with Reaſons for rejecting them; but if, in Regard to others, you ſhould not apprehend me, I ſhall with Pleaſure indeavor to explain myſelf, if called upon; and where-ever you diſſent from my Opinion I ſhall gladly hear your Objections, which, if I can not refute, I will candidly ſubmit to.

LIKE ought never to be uſed, when it can not be tranſlated into *Latin* by the Word *ſimilis.* Example

ample—*The Pope himſelf pays a yearly Acknowlegement for a miraculous Deliverance, when he* HAD LIKE *to have periſhed under the Ruins of an Houſe.*

Conſtituents can never properly ſignify Perſons *appointed*, but ought only to denote Perſons *appointing*.

Now a days, as how, withal, whereof, hereof, wherewith, howſoever, whatſoever, &c. are obſolete, vulgar, and ungrammatical, and not one of them is wanted; for their Places are better ſupplied by *now, how, with, of which, of this, with which, however, whatever, &c. &c.*

Relation and *Council* are improperly uſed to denote Perſons. *Acquiſition, Donation, &c.* ſhould never be uſed to denote Things acquired, or Things given; for with Propriety ſuch Words can only ſignify the Act of giving or acquiring.

ADO is an Abbreviation of *to do*, and ought never to be uſed by any Man, who has the leaſt Regard for the *Engliſh* Language or his own Credit.

You will beſt judge of this Word from the following Sentences ———

Having with much ADO *got clear of* Virgil——

PRISCIAN, *notwithſtanding his Strictneſs, has much* ADO *to preſerve himſelf from Barbariſm.*

The Particle *a* ſhould never be prefixed to the Word *few*: *a* always denotes the ſingular Number, and *few* is of the plural. It would therefore be improper to ſay, *The Event will appear in* A FEW *Days.*

The

The Letter *s* frequently ſtands for *his*; for Example —We ſay *The* KING's *Majeſty*, inſtead of *the King his Majeſty* —— I need not tell you that this *s* diſpleaſes me, as an Abbreviation; but this is not now my only Objection, for the very Mode of Expreſſion, when wrote at Length, is ungrammatical, and can not be tranſlated —— A Petition *to the moſt gratious Majeſty of the King* would in a little Time ſound as eaſy as a Petition to *the* KING's *moſt gratious Majeſty*.

But this is not all; we uſe *s* for *his* without any Scruple, when the Word *his* appears to be direct Nonſenſe as well as falſe Grammar. For Inſtance —*This is the* WORLD's *Senſe of your Actions*, i. e. *This is the World, his Senſe of your Actions.* —— *This is the* QUEEN's *Birth-Day*—that is—*This is the Queen, his Birth-Day.* —— *Behold!* MEN's *Actions are unaccountable* — that is — *Behold! Men, his Actions are unaccountable.* The Expreſſions *ours, theirs, yours, &c.* are of the ſame Kind, but can not eaſily be avoided.

It is ſomewhat extraordinary, that altho the Expreſſions juſt mentioned would paſs unregarded even among Critics, yet if a Man in common Diſcourſe ſhould ſay, *I am againſt* THIS's *being done*, every one would think him a Perſon of no Education. —— In ſhort *of* ought always to be expreſſed, for it is the only true Sign of the Genitive Caſe in *Engliſh* Words; and may our Authors for the future not ſuffer the ſpecious Name of *Angliciſm* to deceive them.

I had

I had almoſt forgot to mention another Inſtance in which *s* is uſed as an Abbreviation, without the leaſt Pretenſe for it: for Example, *The Doctrine of a future* STATE*'s being univerſally taught* —inſtead of, *The Doctrine of a future State being univerſally taught.* — *The Equity of the Epiſcopal* CHURCH*'s being the eſtabliſhed Church* — inſtead of — *The Equity of the Epiſcopal Church being the eſtabliſhed Church.*

As is never uſed to denote Things or Perſons, but when it anſwers to *ſuch.* —— For Example — It would be thought wrong to ſay, *This is the Book* AS *I read Yeſterday.* Or, *This is the Man,* AS *was once my Friend.*

But *as*, when it anſwers to *ſuch*, is frequently uſed to denote either Things or Perſons — for Inſtance — *This is ſuch a Portrait* AS *is not to be matched* — or — *Theſe are ſuch Men* AS *rarely appear.*

I apprehend the Uſe of *as* in theſe laſt Inſtances to be as ungrammatical as in the former; and that a correct Speaker would ſay — *This is ſuch a Portrait,* WHICH *is not to be matched* — or — *Theſe are ſuch Men,* WHO *rarely appear.*

This Exactneſs of Expreſſion may at firſt ſeem ſtiff and formal, but, by being conſtantly practiſed, will ſoon appear as eaſy, as it is regular.

Expreſt ſhould never be wrote for *expreſſed*, *oppreſt* for *oppreſſed*, *eſtabliſht* for *eſtabliſhed*, *ſhewn* for *ſhewed*, *blown* for *blowed*, *grown* for *growed*, *ſlept* for *ſleped*, *ſtopt* for *ſtoped*, *dreamt* for *dreamed*, *matcht* for *matched*, *learnt* for *learned*, *burnt* for

for *burned*, *drawn* for *drawed*, *&c.* for by this Liberty Irregularities, which are always to be avoided, imperceptibly increaſe. Some irregular Words have already quite excluded the regular — we write *knew* for *knowed*, *fell* for *falled*, *taught* for *teached*, *wrote* for *writed*, *ſpelt* for *ſpelled*, *kept* for *keeped*, *roſe* for *riſed*, *&c.*

And the antient regular Words *knowed*, *falled*, *teached*, *writed*, *ſpelled*, *keeped*, *riſed*, *&c.* can, I believe, never be again introduced. Altho the preſent Number of theſe eſtabliſhed Irregulars is but very ſmall, yet ſuch is our Propenſity to ſpoil a good Language, that great Care muſt be taken to prevent Increaſe.

French Words ſhould always be avoided when *Engliſh* Words are to the full as expreſſive; therefore *Critique* ought never to be uſed inſtead of *Criticiſm*; *Equivoque* inſtead of *Equivocation*, *&c.*

Thoſe who uſe theſe foreign Terms are always very vain Men, and generally very ignorant.

Miſtaken ſtrictly means *miſapprehended*, and can not be uſed in any other Senſe; for when a Man ſays — *I am miſtaken*, whatever his Meaning may be, the Words will not import that he is himſelf under a Miſtake, but that he is miſapprehended by others.

Of ſhould never be uſed after Participles, unleſs the Participles are uſed as Subſtantives. —— It would be ſuperfluous to ſay — *Such Words are not becoming* OF *a Paſtoral.* —— But it would be proper to ſay — *The Reading of good Books is uſefull.*

As

AS and so ſhould never be uſed where there is no Similitude. —— For Example — it would be wrong to ſay,— As *the* Romans *burn their Dead*, so *the* Perſians *bury their Dead*.

Or — As *my Studies had furniſhed me with a competent Knowlege of Roman Hiſtory*, so *I had reſolved to imploy myſelf chiefly in Studies of that Sort*.

Theſe are, in the Phraſe of Mr. *Pope*, Similies unlike.

Many more very exceptionable Words and Expreſſions might ſtill be enumerated, ſuch as, *never a one*, *many a Time*, *methinks*, *every five years*, *whileſt the Stream was* a *running*, *whileſt the Book was* a *printing* —— but I grow tired of my Taſk: and to theſe might be added ſeveral Phraſes which are very common, but yet very diſguſtfull. For Inſtance, *Chaulking out a Way — overdoing a Parable — handleing a Subject — driving a Bargain — bolſtering up an Argument*, *&c.* but ſuch an Enumeration would carry me beyond the Limits of my Deſign, and lead me into a Treatiſe upon Stile, which I never intended.

Your moſt obedient

humble Servant, *&c.*

P. S You will probably think my Letter of a ſufficient Length without the Addition of Notes, which are not very uſual in Epiſtolary Writings; but as you inſiſted upon having all my Thoughts and Obſervations upon this Subject, and as I found this the eaſieſt Way of conveying them, I ſhall make no Apology.